

## Steer Clear of FINANCIAL FRAUD

(NC) As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, fraudsters are taking advantage of people by preying on fears and using misinformation. In fact, one in three Canadians indicated they have been targeted by attempts to obtain their financial information through phishing or hacking, according to data from the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada.

Some common scams can include phone calls, emails and texts that ask for personal or financial information, such as your name, address, birth date, social insurance number or banking information. If you receive unsolicited or suspicious emails or text messages from a financial institution, don't click on the links or attachments.

Fraudsters who gain access to your accounts can steal your money, apply for a personal loan, order a credit card or even apply for a mortgage in your name. It's important to know that your financial

institution will never ask for personal information, login credentials or account information by email or text message. Remember: If you didn't initiate the contact with a financial institution, you don't know who you're dealing with.

If you're suspicious of information you receive electronically related to your banking activities, contact your bank directly before taking any action. Here are some tips to help you keep your information safe:

- Never give out your personal or financial information by email or text.
- When banking online, enter your bank's website in your browser yourself.
- Beware of questionable offers related to financial relief measures or quick fixes. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

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## President's Perspective: Reasons for Optimism

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic. We're now more than a year later and, while mitigation efforts continue to influence the way we approach our day-to-day lives, there is a silver lining, a shining light, and reason for optimism as we move closer and closer to normalcy.

Of course, vaccination is a major reason for optimism moving forward. Vaccine candidates for COVID-19 are approved for use in Canada and the vaccine rollout is picking up. Public Services and Procurement Minister Anita Anand estimated that the country will have 36.5 million doses by the end of June, which will be enough for every adult in Canada to receive at least one dose.

It's worth noting that some manufactures of the vaccine require two doses and depending on the impact of virus variants there may be a need for additional vaccines in the future so we will need to give this some time and our patience as it rolls out.

Although vaccination will certainly expedite our recovery, vaccine hesitancy could delay that recovery as not every Canadian will choose to get the vaccine. The three manufacturers of COVID-19 vaccine that are currently in the Canadian market have all been through rigorous scientific review and health testing to ensure that they are safe for public use.

Concerns such as the vaccine altering a person's DNA or vaccines transmitting the actual virus are unfounded and contribute to hesitancy. It is important to understand the facts as backed by science knowing that testing is rigorous, and safety is a priority.

In those facts you will also find that the efficacy of Canadian vaccine candidates is very good and that they can offer strong protection from symptomatic COVID-19 disease and more importantly virtually eliminate severe disease. Certainly worth considering for those who may be on the fence.

We vaccinate for personal immunity but also for our family, our friends and our community. Getting to herd immunity or an approximation of 70-80% of people immunized either through vaccination or by contracting the virus requires

active and deliberate support. How quickly we reach this critical milestone remains to be seen but most certainly understanding and sharing facts about vaccination is a positive contribution that each of us can make to support the people we care about and the communities we live in.

Until then, it's crucial that we remain vigilant in keeping this virus at bay. By now, preventative measures should be second nature — wear a face mask in public, maintain a minimum of two metres of distance between yourself and the nearest individual, limit close contacts outside your household and make a point to frequently wash your hands. COVID fatigue may be kicking in, but these safety practices remain as effective today as they were at the start of the pandemic.

The effects of social distancing and work-from-home are continuing to take their toll on Canadians, too. Feelings of isolation and loneliness are prevalent and growing.

Please remember that each of us have a role to play in helping others. Reach out to the people in your life and let them know you're thinking about them. Be present when helping friends who are struggling. Mental health is an important part of the COVID-19 discussion and it's vital that we look out for our friends, colleagues and neighbours.

While it is important to take care of ourselves, doing so allows us to help others and each of us doing our part contributes to individual, family, community and ultimately world wide immunity.

The adage "we're in this together" has never been more appropriate as we move through this next period where extended patience, continued vigilance, immunity, and support for one another are the very things that when taken together will lead to an early recovery. We are well on our way... hang in there!

*Safety, it's an attitude!*

Gareth Jones, President & CEO

## Financial Fraud (continued from page 1)

If you think you've been scammed, become a victim of identity theft, or you've accidentally given your information to a scammer, you should:

- change all your passwords immediately, including those for your online or mobile banking and email accounts;
- ask your financial institution to place a fraud alert on the account;
- regularly review your bank account or credit card statements to make sure there is no suspicious activity;
- order a free credit report and carefully check for anything unusual;

In addition to the above, if you're a victim of fraud, it's important to:

- contact your financial institution immediately;
- report the incident to your local police;
- contact Canada's two credit bureaus, Equifax and TransUnion, and ask them to place fraud alert on your credit report file;
- contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre or visit their website and complete the online report.

The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada provides unbiased and fact-based information you can count on. You can learn more about how to protect yourself from unauthorized transactions at [canada.ca/money](https://canada.ca/money).



### Looking Ahead

One year into the pandemic and the Canada Safety Council continues to work remotely. It's been an exhausting year but safety concerns never take a break... which means we don't, either!

As we approach the spring months, we're hard at work developing new safety messaging. One of our major recent projects has involved the development of a brand new offshoot of our nationally recognized Gearing Up motorcycle training program, aimed at three-wheeled motorcycles. Stay tuned for more information about the Gearing Up On3 course!

Additionally, work is underway on an Elmer the Safety Elephant-themed vaccine awareness course, to be delivered online to school-aged children in a bid to remove some of the confusion and misinformation about vaccination. More information to come as this project moves forward.

## 5 tips to stay safe on the water

(NC) After a long winter in isolation, we're itching more than ever to get back on the water this year. But in the excitement to launch, it's important to keep sight of how to do so safely. Keep yourself and loved ones safe on the water this season with these simple tips.

### 1. Keep your safety equipment up to date.

It's easy to let old equipment and maintenance fall by the wayside. The start of each boating season should begin with a thorough check of your lifejackets, emergency lights, bailing gear and other vital safety equipment. It's a simple habit that can save lives.

### 2. Know the water before you go out.

Too many boaters have run up on shoals or been swamped by waves too large for their vessel to handle. Before you leave dock, make sure you know your planned route, as well as the water depth and location of any rocks. Water levels change year to year, and even throughout the season. Use a navigation app whenever possible to stay up to date on the changing safe channels.

### 3. Keep a close eye on the weather forecast.

Out on the water, weather conditions can change quickly, turning a sunny joyride into a dangerous attempt to get back to shore.

Avoid getting caught in the storm by maintaining a close eye on the weather radar. There are a number of free apps that provide current conditions, as well as marine forecasts for boaters.

### 4. Learn your emergency numbers.

If you see a hazard or an accident on the water, call the Canadian Coast Guard emergency number — it can mean the difference between life and death. The numbers vary from province to province, so make sure you have the right number for your region. Have a physical backup of the number laminated in your vessel in case you need to call from an unfamiliar phone.

### 5. Register a marine emergency beacon.

If you get into trouble, you won't be without assistance. The Canadian Coast Guard search and rescue teams are ready to leap to your aid, but they need to be able to find you and know an emergency has happened. Make sure you register your Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) with the Canadian Beacon Registry and keep your contact information up to date. In case of an emergency, rescuers will immediately know exactly where you are and will arrive sooner.

Find more information at [ccg-gcc.gc.ca/emergency](http://ccg-gcc.gc.ca/emergency).







## Five Tips for Effective Remote Learning

(NC) As schools continue with virtual learning, most parents are looking for new ways to keep their kids engaged and on track. Fortunately, there are some simple tips and tricks that can help. Stay ahead of the learning curve with these simple remote learning tips.

### 1. Keep to a school schedule.

School time means structured time, and maintaining that schedule will be your best tool to separate class time from playtime. Using a timer to clearly block off chunks of time for work and breaks will do wonders for your child's study discipline.

### 2. Create designated environments.

Create effective habits and provide dedicated spaces for learning. Set aside part of the home for your child's workspace and let them unwind somewhere else. If space is tight, even a small corner or table blocked off from everything else can create that mental separation needed for focusing.

### 3. Get creative with new tools.

Sometimes all it takes is something new to keep kids motivated. For example, some colourful binders with their favourite characters can help

with organization, a white noise app can help with concentration. If your child doesn't use every tool provided, that's okay. The important thing is introducing them to the importance of finding the right tools to stay productive.

### 4. Communicate with teachers.

The relationship between parents and teachers has never been more essential to your kids' success at school. So, make sure you're regularly checking in to see what's working and what needs improvement. Whether it's email, a phone call or video call, find what works and stick to it.

### 5. Make sure your connection is up to snuff.

Even the best remote learning setup can fall prey to a poor internet connection. This can be especially challenging in rural or remote areas. But help is on the way. The government's Universal Broadband Fund is focused on making sure Canadians all have access to reliable high-speed connection needed to study remotely. The faster connection will help your child stay on track, no matter what the challenge.

Find more information at [canada.ca/getconnected](https://canada.ca/getconnected).

## Children's Privacy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

*Interaction in today's connected world has implications for all of us. What does this mean for children? CSA Group, in conjunction with a group of researchers, explore this question in-depth. Click through for more!*

## Why You Need to Test Your Home's Radon Levels

(NC) The COVID-19 pandemic is shaping our lives in countless ways. For many of us, it's meant spending more time at home this past year than ever before.

Even as we stay inside to keep ourselves and our family safe from COVID, clocking so many hours at home means we may be unwittingly exposing ourselves to another danger: radon gas.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes from uranium in the ground.

You can't see it or smell it, but it's there. Whether your home is newly built or has been around for centuries it has some radon gas in it, the question is how much?

Long-term exposure to high levels of radon gas increases your risk of developing lung cancer. In fact, it's the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers, and in Canada

it's estimated that more than 3000 deaths a year are from radon-induced lung cancer.

The only way to know the radon level in your home is to do a simple and inexpensive test. Testing can be done by purchasing a do-it-yourself test kit or hire a certified measurement professional.

If you do have a high level of radon it can be easily fixed. Radon reduction techniques are safe, effective and have a reasonable cost.

A radon mitigation system can be installed in less than a day and in most homes will reduce the radon level by more than 80 per cent for about the same cost as other common home repairs such as replacing the furnace or air conditioner.

While you keep safe from COVID-19, don't expose yourself to other hazards. Find more information at [canada.ca/radon](https://canada.ca/radon).

*Do you have a safety story, tip or pet-peeve to share?  
Email [media@safety-council.org](mailto:media@safety-council.org), tweet us [@CanadaSafetyCSC](https://twitter.com/CanadaSafetyCSC) or send us a post or a message on our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/canada.safety>.*



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